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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish whether or not teacher perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their supervisor were related to teacher perceptions of supervisor style. Data were collected from 204 student teachers involved in a student teaching experience in a large, central New York area from 1967-70. Student teachers were asked to respond to two questionnaires. Responses were solicited during a seminar session 6 weeks after the start of student teaching. The first questionnaire, Barret-Lennard Relationship Inventory, measured student teacher perceptions of the quality of the interpersonal relationships existing between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. Areas of concern were the supervisors': regard for student, empathy, unconditionality of regard for the student, and congruence. The second questionnaire, Supervisor Behavior Style Scales, measured student teacher perceptions of cooperating teacher supervisory behavioral style. Students were asked to rate the amount of emphasis they: a) saw their teachers putting on nine behaviors and b) wished their cooperating teacher would place on each behavior. To maximize supervisee-perceived learning and productivity, results indicate that high quality interpersonal relationships should be the supervisors' primary objective. Further research to discern other factors which may be affecting interpersonal relationships is recommended. A 24-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

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INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTIONS AS A FACTOR IN TEAC' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORY STYLE

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The purpose of this study was to establish whether or not teacher perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their supervisor were related to teacher perceptions of supervisor style. The point of view taken for this study was that teacher perceptions of supervisory style would be dependent upon the perceived quality of the interpersonal relationship. The establishment of interpersonal relations was seen as occuring independently of productive instruction.

Qualitive Measures of Interpersonal Relationships. Rogers' work in psychotherapy has enabled him to formulate a conception of teaching and learning effectiveness in which significant learning may occur on the part of the learner. In a series of papers, Rogers (1957, 1958, 1959, 1962, 1965, and 1967) has identified certain qualities or behaviors of therapists which facilitate learning in the clients. Briefly stated, these qualities are congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding.

Congruence means the person is being totally himself in interaction with others. The person can be seen as a real person with others. Unconditional positive regard means he accepts the other person as a separate person with permission for him to have his own feelings and experience and to find his own meaning in them. Empathic understanding means the person has the ability to understand the other person's reactions from his point of view. Along with these conditions for significant learning, it is also necessary for these conditions to be communicated to the learner (Rogers, 1959: 235).

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Rogers' work suggests that the initiation of learning in the dyadic situation does not rest solely upon the skills of the supervisor but rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the relationship between supervisor and teacher.

Barrett-Lennard (1962) developed an instrument which measures the qualities of regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, and congruence. These qualities are similar to those of Rogers; however, it appears that Barrett-Lennard has expanded and refined the quality of unconditionality of regard into an added quality of regard, which is the general tendency (at a given time) of the amount of esteem one person holds for another.

Much of the above theory and findings have dealt primarily with the thearapist-client relationship, not with the supervisor-teacher relationship. This might lead one to say that these studies have no bearing on the present context. However, work by Fiedler (1950), Soper and Combs (1962), and Combs and Soper (1963) support the observations of Combs and Snygg (1959) and Rogers (1958) that the nature of a good helping relationship is generally recognized by everyone.

These notions suggest for significant learning to take place in the teaching situation, regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, and congruence should be exhibited by the supervisor and perceived by the teacher.

Supervisory Behavioral Styles. The supervisor may be considered to be the leader of a two person group which includes himself and the teacher. The supervisor exhibits certain leader behaviors that affect the social climate, productivity, and morale of the group.

The early work on leadership by Lippitt (1940) and Lippitt and White (1943) provide evidence that the same group of people will behave in different ways when operating under leaders who behave differently. They describe two studies in which leader behaviors are authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. From

the studies they made the following generalizations: Laissez-faire leader behavior was characterized by less work done, poorer work, more play, and a large amount of conversation. Authoritarian leader behavior was characterized by a greater quantity of work, more hostility, more demands for attention, more destruction of own property, more scapegoat behavior, undersurface discontent, more dependent behavior, less conversation, some loss of individuality, and frustration. Democratic leader behavior was characterized by stronger work motivation, greater originality, more group mindedness, and more friendliness.

Following this same line, studies of Amidon and Giammatteo (1967), Pankratz (1967), Amidon and Flanders (1961), Soar (1965), Powell (1968), and Weber (1968) indicate that there is a tendency for indirect teacher behaviors to be positively related to greater student productivity.

The studies of Blumberg and Amidon (1965), Blumberg, Weber, and Amidon (1967), and Blumberg (1968) indicated in a generally consistent manner that teachers who saw their supervisors placing either heavy emphasis on telling and asking or light emphasis on asking felt more positively about the quality of interpersonal relationships in supervision. In addition, they felt they had more communicative freedom and saw their supervision as being more productive than those teachers who perceive the behavior styles of their supervisors placing heavy emphasis on telling and light emphasis on asking or placing light emphasis on telling and asking (Blumberg and Weber, 1968).

The studies cited seem to indicate that the productivity of interactive situations is related to the quality of interpersonal relationships of the participants. As a general conceptual point of view particularly related to this paper, the position is that when the quality of interpersonal relations between supervisor and supervisee are positive, their relationship will be

perceived to be more productive. During supervision, however, there is the likelihood that there will be discrepancies between "perceived" and "wished for" supervisor behavior. The smaller these discrepancies the better the supervisee might tend to feel about his supervision and hence the more receptive he would tend to be with respect to the goals of supervision (i.e. perceived helpfulness). Finely, the discrepancies being dealt with in this study are those associated with "perceived-wished for" indirectness and "perceived-wished for" directness. Whether or not discrepancies scores of these behaviors are dependent upon the establishment of quality interpersonal relations (regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, anc congruence) is the notion tested by this study.

HYPOTHESES

The major hypothesis of this study was that different perceptions of the state of interpersonal relations existing between student teachers and cooperating teachers would produce differential discrepancies with regard to how student teachers perceived their cooperating teachers' behavioral styles and how they wished them to behave. Specifically, the following null subhypotheses were developed:

1. There would be no differences in direct discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality regard.

2. There would be no differences in indirect discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality regard.

3. There would be no differences in direct discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality empathy.

4. There would be no differences in indirect discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality empathy.

5. There would be no differences in direct discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality unconditionality of regard.

6. There would be no differences in indirect discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality unconditionality of regard.

7. There would be no differences in direct discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality congruence.

8. There would be no differences in indirect discrepancy scores between the conditions of high, middle, or low quality congruence.

PROCEDURES

The general procedures was one in which student teachers were asked to respond to two questionnaires. Responses were solicited during a seminar session six weeks after the start of the student teaching experience. The first questionnaire measured student teacher perceptions of the quality of the interpersonal relationships existing between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher while the second measured student teacher perceptions of cooperating teacher supervisory behavioral style.

Sample. Data were collected from two hundred four student teachers (sixty-nine elementary undergraduates, eighty-four elementary graduates, and fifty-seven secondary graduates) who were involved in a student teaching experience in a large central New York urban area during the period 1967-1970. These student teachers do not represent a random sample; however, all those available volunteered to participate and hence represent a broad spectrum of past experience, grade level, and ability. Findings and conclusions must be viewed with this limitation in mind.

Instruments. The instrument employed to obtain a measure of interpersonal relationships was the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (1962). This inventory, although developed originally for use in the therapeutic setting, has seen extensive recent use in the field of education.

The Relationship Inventory is a sixty-four item questionnaire made up of scales concerned with regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, and congruence. Each scale is composed of eight positively oriented and eight negatively oriented items. Each item may be rated from plus three, "I strongly feel that it is true," to minus three, "I strongly feel that it is not true." The negatively

oriented items are constructed so that a "minus" rating is treated as a "plus" as far as interpersonal relations are concerned. On each scale it is possible to get a total score ranging from plus forty-eight to minus forty-eight.

The measure of student teacher perception of supervisor style was the Supervisor Behavior Style Scales developed by Blumberg and Amidon (1965). This instrument asked student teachers to rate, on a non-value basis, the amount of emphasis they saw their cooperating teachers putting on nine different behaviors (e.g., giving suggestions, asking questions, giving information, etc.) during the course of their interaction together. Upon completion the student teachers were instructed to then go back and reexamine each question listing the amount of emphasis the wished their cooperating teacher would place on each of the behaviors. The design of the instrument makes it possible to categorize behavioral styles based on Flanders concepts (1960) of direct-indirect behavior of teachers in the classroom. Further, discrepancy scores were obtained for the direct and indirect dimensions by subtracting the "wished for" from the "perceived" score. Each item may be rated from one to six--"No Emphasis" to "Very Heavy Emphasis." Three items are classified as direct and six items as indirect. The range of direct scores could be from three to eighteen and of indirect scores from six to thirty-six. A direct score of three, for example, would indicate perceptions of Very Heavy Emphasis on directness by the student teacher. Similarly, the range of total discrepancy scores for directness could be from minus thirty to plus thirty. The sign for any discrepancy is indicative only of direction that discrepancy takes in relation to wished for behavior. A direct discrepancy score of minus five, for example, would indicate perceptions of No Emphasis on directness by a student teacher who at the same time wished for Very Heavy Emphasis on the particular behavior.

Statical Procedures. For purposes of analysis it was first necessary to separate out high, middle, and low scores for the independent variables of regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, and congruence. Next, using the weighting system devised for the behavioral perception instrument, absolute discrepancy scores for the direct and indirect scales were obtained. The dependent variables of direct discrepancy and indirect discrepancy were formed by subtracting the direct "wished for" score from the direct "perceived" score and the indirect "wished for" score from the indirect "perceived" score. The data were then analyzed by means of analysis of variance.

RESULTS

Examination of Table 1 indicates that null subhypotheses 1, 3, 5, and 7 could not be rejected. These are the qualities that are related to the direct discrepancy scores. Null subhypotheses 2, 4, 6, and 8 are rejected at the .01 level of significance. These are the qualities related to the indirect discrepancy scores. More specifically, no significant differences were found to exist among high, middle, and low qualities of regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, and congruence with respect to the discrepancy between perceive and wished for supervisor behavioral style characterized as direct. Whereas, significant differences were found to exist among high, middle, and low qualities of regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, and congruence with respect to the discrepancy between perceived and wished for supervisor behavioral style characterized as indirect.

TABLE 1

Analysis of Variance for Three Groups Based Upon Student Teacher Perceptions of

Regard

Item	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
1. DPW	Between Groups	1.12	2	.56	0.11 N.S.
	Within Groups	1043.72	201	5.19	
2. IPW	Between Groups	516.68	2	258.34	15.46[1]
	Within Groups	3359.49	201	16.71	

Empathy

Item	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.
1. DPW	Between Groups	13.80	2	6.90	1.34 N.S.
	Within Groups	1031.04	201	5.13	
2. IPW	Between Groups	653.75	2	326.87	20.39[1]
	Within Groups	3222.43	201	16.03	

Unconditional Regard

Item	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
1. DPW	Between Groups	10.03	2	5.01	0.97 N.S.
	Within Groups	1034.81	201	5.15	
2. IPW	Between Groups	213.12	2	106.56	5.85[1]
	Within Groups	3663.06	201	18.22	

Congruence

Item	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
1. DPW	Between Groups	5.04	2	2.52	0.48 N.S.
	Within Groups	1039.80	201	5.17	
2. IPW	Between Groups	598.98	2	299.49	18.37[1]
	Within Groups	3277.20	201	16.30	

[1] F ratio significant at the .01 level

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the supervisor-supervisee relationship the degree of directness or indirectness is not the issue. The issue is how an individual perceives the type of supervision he receives as compared to what he feels he wants. With respect to this, the data indicates that as positive interpersonal relations are established in a supervisory setting, the indirect "perceived-wished for" discrepancy will be minimized. This seems to say to the supervisor that if he wants to maximize supervisee perceived learning and productivity, then he should concentrate upon establishing high quality interpersonal relationships as his primary objective.

The establishment of high quality interpersonal relationships does not seem to be a factor alone in reducing direct discrepancy scores. This is not to say that high quality regard, empathy, unconditionality of regard, and congruence doesn't contribute to the reduction, it does say that other factors may be operating. One of these other factors may be the nature of student teaching where the student teacher has high anxiety to do well. He wants to know how to do the proper things in order to succeed. This desire seems to demand more direct supervisory behavior than perceived to be given.

This study barely gets beneath the surface in examining the dynamics of interaction during supervision. More research needs to be done to identify other factors that enter into the supervisor-supervisee interaction during the supervisory process.

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